

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 SAB-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /132 W

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O P 060921Z MAY 74

FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 467

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0584

JERUSALEM FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, UR

SUBJECT: GROMYKO VISIT TO DAMASCUS

1. SUMMARY: THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ON MAY 5 THAT SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER ANDRE GROMYKO WOULD ARRIVE ON MAY 5 FOR OFFICIAL THREE DAY VISIT TO DAMASCUS. HE REPORTEDLY MET ON MAY 5 WITH BOTH PRESIDENT ASAD AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM. DAMASCENES ARE CONCERNED THAT GROMYKO HAS COME TO PLAY A SPOILING ROLE. END SUMMARY.

2. AL-BAATH ANNOUNCED THAT ANDRE GROMYKO, FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE SOVIET UNION, ARRIVED ON MAY 5 AT THE INVITATION OF THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT FOR A THREE DAY OFFICIAL VISIT. HE WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTERS ZAKARIA ISMAIL AND ABDALHANI AL-RAFTI AND OTHER RANKING OFFICIALS. ON ARRIVAL GROMYKO TOLD REPORTERS, "I ARRIVE IN DAMASCUS ON A SHORT, FRIENDLY VISIT. THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT WE
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WILL DISCUSS IS A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE

EAST, ESPECIALLY THE SUBJECT OF DISENGAGEMENT AND THERE IS NO NEED TO ASSURE (SYRIA) THAT AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN SOVIET ATTITUDE ON THIS SUBJECT IS TO END ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ALL ARAB TERRITORY. I AM SURE PRESENT CONSULTATIONS WILL BE INTEREST TO BOTH SIDES."

3. AL-BAATH REPORTED MAY 6 THAT GROMYKO MET FOR FIVE HOURS AND 15 MINUTES WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD. FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR MOUKHITDINOV WERE ALSO PRESENT. ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS, ASAD DESCRIBED THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE REGION. HE STRESSED TWO CARDINAL POINTS OF THE SYRIAN POSITION-- NECESSITY OF COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ARAB OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND GUARANTEE OF RIGHTS OF ARAB PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. THE PAPER STATED THE TALKS INCLUDED DISCUSSIONS OF A NUMBER OF OTHER AFFAIRS OF INTEREST TO BOTH SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION AND ADDED THAT THE TWO WILL MEET AGAIN THIS EVENING (MAY 6). PRIOR TO SEEING THE PRESIDENT, GROMYKO SPENT 45 MINUTES WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM.

4. COMMENT: DAMASCENES ARE REPORTEDLY AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN WHY GROMYKO HAS COME. MANY ARE EXPRESSING THE FEAR THAT GROMYKO HAS COME TO PLAY "A SPOILING ROLE" AT A TIME WHEN IT APPEARS THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S EFFORTS ARE CLOSE TO SUCCESS. AT THE SAME TIME, DAMASCENES ARE ALSO SAID TO BE CONFIDENT THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER IS INTELLIGENT AND CLEVER ENOUGH TO OUTWIT GROMYKO.
SCOTES

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